

Message Text

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65

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 0223

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MORG, GR

SUBJECT: NEW CHIEF OF HELLENIC NAVY NAMED

REF: DAO ATHENS 081405Z JAN 76 (NOTAL)

1. THE GREEK MINISTRY OF DEFENSE ANNOUNCED JANUARY 8 THAT VICE ADMIRAL CONSTANTINE ENGOLFOPOULOS HAD RESIGNED AS CHIEF OF THE HELLENIC VANY AND THAT VICE ADMIRAL SPIROS MOURIKIS - UNTIL NOW INSPECTOR GENERAL OF THE NAVY - WOULD REPLACE HIM (REFTEL. THE OFFICIAL CEREMONY MARKING THE CHANGE OF COMMAND TOOK PLACE MID-MORNING JANUARY 9 AT THE NAVAL ACADEMY AFTER WHICH BOTH OFFICERS WERE EXPECTED TO PAY A CALL ON PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS.

2. IN ITS ANNOUNCEMENT, THE DEFENSE MINISTRY RECALLED THAT ADMIRAL ENGOLFOPOULOS HAD AGREED TO ASSUME THE DUTIES OF NAVY CHIEF " FOR A FEW MONTHS" AT THE TIME
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THAT HE ACCEPTED THAT POSITION LAST JANUARY. THE

ANNOUNCEMENT ALSO STATED THAT DEFENSE MINISTER AVEROFF HAD EXPRESSED HIS BEST WISHES AND GREAT APPRECIATION TO ADMIRAL ENGOLFOPOULOS FOR THE VERY VALUABLE WORK WHICH HE HAD CARRIED OUT DURING HIS TWELVE MONTHS OF SERVICE. THE ANNOUNCEMENT FINALLY NOTED THAT ENGOLFOPOULOS WOULD RECEIVE THE TITLE OF HONORARY ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET UPON HIS RETIREMENT.

3. MOST ATHENS NEWSPAPERS JANUARY 9 - CARRIED THE REPORT ON THE NAVY CHANGES AS A LEAD STORY - WITH SOME ASSERTING THAT ENGOLFOPOULOS RESIGNED BECAUSE HE DISAGREED WITH MINISTER OF DEFENSE AVEROFF OVER THE COMMAND STRUCTURE OF THE THREE BRANCHES OF THE ARMED SERVICES. THESE REPORTS SUGGESTED THAT ENGOLFOPOULOS WISHED A RETURN TO THE EARLIER SETUP IN WHICH THE THREE CHIEFS OF THE ARMED SERVICES RETAINED THEIR INDEPENDENCE REPORTING DIRECTLY TO DEFENSE MINISTER AND NOT THROUGH A SUPREME COMMANDER OF THE ARMED FORCES. TO VIMA (LIBERAL, OPPOSITION) AND ONE OR TWO OTHER PAPERS REPORTED THAT ENGOLFOPOULOS ALSO DISAGREED WITH AVEROFF REGARDING THE PRIORITY WHICH SHOULD BE GIVEN TO THE NAVY IN THE ACQUISITION OF NEW ARMAMENTS AS OPPOSED TO THE OTHER TWO SERVICES. THE TO VIMA STORY ASSERTED THAT ON AT LEAST TWO OCCASIONS ENGOLFOPOULOS' REQUEST FOR FOUR ANTI-SUBMARINE FRIGATES HAD BEEN GIVEN A LOWER PRIORITY THAN OTHER ARMAMENT ORDERS SUBMITTED BY THE AIR FORCE AND THE ARMY.

4. PRIOR TO HIS RECALL TO ACTIVE DUTY IN JANUARY 1975, ENGOLFOPOULOS HAD BEEN ON RETIRED STATUS SINCE THE MILITARY COUP OF APRIL 21, 1967. IN MAY 1973 HE HAD BEEN ARRESTED AND HELD IN THE MILITARY POLICE (ESA) DETENTION CENTER BECAUSE HE HAD ALLEGEDLY BEEN INVOLVED IN THE SO-CALLED "NAVY MUTINY" THAT MONTH, ALTHOUGH THIS WAS NEVER PROVED. AFTER THE RETURN OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT TO GREECE IN JULY 1974 ENGOLFOPOULOS SERVED FOR THE PERIOD OCTOBER-NOVEMBER AS MINISTER OF THE MERCHANT MARINE. IN AUGUST 1975 HE WAS ONE OF THE WITNESSES
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AT THE FIRST TRIAL OF TORTUREERS AND IN HIS EMOTION-LADEN TESTIMONY ALLEGED INTER ALIA THAT CERTAIN ESA FUNCTIONARIES WERE TRAINED IN "PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE" METHODS IN THE USA.

5. THE DEFENSE ATTACHE WILL BE REPORTING FURTHER ON THESE CHANGES. IT IS THE EMBASSY'S JUDGMENT THIS CHANGE IN THE TOP LEADERSHIP OF THE NAVY WILL NOT

ADVERSELY EFFECT THE EFFICIENCY OR EFFECTIVE CONDUCT
OF THE HELLENIC NAVY'S MISSION.
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